

**ITEM 8 - Action**  
October 18, 2006

Review of Comments Received and Acceptance of  
Recommended Responses for Inclusion in the  
Air Quality Conformity Assessment, the 2006 CLRP, and FY  
2007-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Staff

**Recommendation:** Receive briefing on the comments received and the recommended responses, and accept them for inclusion in the air quality conformity assessment, the 2006 CLRP, and the FY 2007-2012 TIP.

**Issues:** None

**Background:** Federal regulations require that the CLRP and TIP include a summary analysis and report on significant public comments as part of the public involvement process.

The attached memorandum of October 16, 2006 presents draft responses to comments received through October 14, the last day of the 30-day public comment period. The final version of the attached comments and responses memorandum will be incorporated into the documents scheduled for consideration under agenda items 9, 10, and 11.

The public was encouraged to submit comments online. Copies of these comments are attached. All of the comments can be viewed at [www.mwcog.org/transportation/public/comments.asp](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/public/comments.asp)

# **National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board**

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## **M E M O R A N D U M**

October 18, 2006

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board

**FROM:** Ronald F. Kirby  
Director, Department of  
Transportation Planning

**SUBJECT:** Draft Responses to Comments Received Through the Close of the  
Public Comment Period on October 14, 2006 on the 2006 CLRP  
and FY 2007-2012 TIP

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### **Introduction**

On September 14, 2006, the draft air quality conformity analysis, the draft 2006 CLRP and web-based information, and the draft FY 2007-2012 TIP were released for a 30-day public comment period which closed on October 14. An opportunity for public comment on these documents was provided at the beginning of the September 20 TPB meeting.

Public comments have been posted as received on the COG web site at <http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/public/comments.asp>. Board members are invited to review these comments on the web. This memorandum provides draft responses to comments received through the close of the public comment period on October 14. The Board will be briefed on the comments received and recommended responses at the October 18 meeting.

The public was encouraged to submit comments online. The four comments received through the close of the public comment period are attached and recommended responses are presented below:

1. Comment: There is no mention of a Second Crossing of the Potomac west of the American Legion Bridge.  
Response: Currently there are no studies or projects related to such a new

bridge crossing included in the draft 2006 CLRP or FY 2007-2012 TIP.

2. Comment: The region has a very good mass transit system. Why not encourage more people to use buses.

Response: The region has an extensive and well utilized bus system. The system includes regional Metobus service, the DC bus circulator, and locally-operated bus services in Northern Virginia and Suburban Maryland. On November 30, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is sponsoring a one-day conference to bring local and state leaders together with transportation experts to identify strategies to continue to improve bus service and increase bus ridership.

3. Comment: On page 6 of the plan brochure, the title, "Transit Ridership is Constrained," and the substance of the section are unacceptable and inconsistent with other aspects of the plan.

Response: As explained on page 4 of the brochure, federal law requires that the plan be based on revenue sources that are "reasonably expected to be available." The CLRP is a financially constrained plan. WMATA currently has unfunded capital needs that would expand the rail system's capacity. Due to the lack of dedicated funding for these needs, the TPB has placed a constraint within its regional transportation model that caps the transit ridership to or through the core area to 2010 levels. During 2006, progress was made in Congress and the legislatures of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia to identify an additional \$3 billion in revenues (\$1.5 billion in federal funds for the Davis Bill and \$1.5 billion in matching funds from dedicated sources in the District and states) for WMATA's future needs.

4. Comment: While I was pleased to see the picture of a bicycle rider and reference to the Bicycle and Pedestrian plan, the overall plan should recognize the importance of bicycling and walking throughout its report.

Response: The brochure referenced in this comment highlights all of the significant projects and aspects of the plan, including major bicycle and pedestrian improvements. In July 2006, the TPB adopted the new *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region*, a comprehensive 150 page document that identifies the capital improvements, studies, actions, and strategies that the region proposes to carry out by 2030 for major bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

1. There is no mention of a Second Crossing of the Potomac west of the Amer. Legion Bridge. A bridge would certainly help reduce the bottleneck at the 485 bridge. The greatest percentage growth will occur in the outer suburbs but where is the bridge from Maryland to Virginia? Lots of extra miles driven, more emissions, time wasted, etc. without a second crossing.

2. The Region has a very good mass transit system. Why not encourage more people to use **buses**. There seems to be a stigma (lower income, working class people only). Why not encourage more young people and seniors to use the bus. It's certainly a way to reduce fuel consumption, traffic congestion, and emissions. We need to make it "stylish" to use the Bus.

Thanks,

*John Tiernan*

Bethesda, MD

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Subject: Comment on Regional Transportation Plan(DRAFT September 20, 2006)  
October 7, 2006

Although the overall subject plan is excellent, there are a few aspects that need improvement:

1. On page 6, the title, "Transit Ridership is Constrained", and the substance of this section are unacceptable and inconsistent with other aspects of the plan. If we suppress transit growth, we will push up congestion on highways and streets and worsen air quality. We must also think beyond our region; suppressing transit usage increases the use of single occupancy vehicles which in turn contributes to increase in global warming gases.
2. While I was pleased to see the picture of the bicycle rider on page 13 and reference to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, the overall Regional Plan should recognize the importance of bicycling and walking throughout its report.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Reis  
Silver Spring, MD